

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 1, 9, and 21 are amended herein. Claims 1, 3-9, 11-16, and 21-22 are currently pending.

In the Examiner's rejection of the claims under 35 U.S.C. 101, the Examiner states that the claims are "directed to mathematical operations without being limited to a practical application." Claims 1, 9, and 21 have been amended to clarify that the mapping of signals is used to make connections through the network element switch. As communication networks continue to grow, there is an increasing need for multi-stage switches that can handle significant increases in bandwidth. Applicant's invention, as set forth in the claims provides a network element switch configured to handle this increase in bandwidth. The novel mapping of the signals reduces the probability of blocking.

Accordingly, the pending claims are believed to comply with the requirements of 35 U.S.C. 101.

Claims 1 and 9 have been amended to include a device configured to calculate the number of signals between each of the input nodes and the center nodes and the number of signals between each of the center nodes and the output nodes and map signals between nodes. (See, e.g., page 14 lines 5-11 of the specification). The claims have further been amended to remove "based on a comparison of a number of signals".

As amended, claims 1 and 9 are believed to comply with the requirements of 35 U.S.C. 112.

For the foregoing reasons, Applicant believes that all of the pending claims are in condition for allowance and should be passed to issue. If the Examiner feels that a telephone conference would in any way expedite the prosecution of the application, please do not hesitate to call the undersigned at (408) 399-5608.

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Respectfully submitted,



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